

DoD readies biometric ID system to protect troops, save lives

By Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is fine-tuning a \$75 million biometric identification system designed to improve force protection at U.S. military bases in Iraq.

The system will use biographical data, facial photographs, fingerprints and iris scans collected from Iraqis and other non-U.S. citizens who want to work on U.S. bases in Iraq to develop ID cards that can't be counterfeited.

"This is a force-protection initia-

tive," a DoD official noted at the system demonstration. The new ID cards contain embedded information that can't be altered. "This badge will be able to uniquely identify that person as the right person. You can't counterfeit it; you can't tamper with it."

Base employees who are issued new biometric ID cards will be required to pass through security-control points where the badges will be electronically checked, he explained.

Employee information gathered at enrollment points will be for-

warded to self-contained control stations. The control stations feature independent power, heating and air-conditioning systems, all a necessity in an austere, forward-deployed environment like Iraq. The control stations will process the enrollment data to produce the biometrically enabled ID card.

Project managers are now working closely with U.S. Central Command officials who attended the briefing to resolve any remaining issues. The new system will be implemented in Iraq as soon as possible, officials said.

Air Force launches 'AF eMail'

Master Sgt. Mitch Gettle
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The Air Force began the first phase of a new e-mail system in May that will enhance communication of Airmen around the world.

The AF eMail (a.k.a. eMail-for-Life) is a single, static e-mail address that will not change during the career of an Airmen or civilian employee.

"At any given time, we can only reliably connect and communicate with 79 percent of our force through e-mail," said Capt. Kirk Phillips, chief of the Information Technology Division, Air Force Senior Leader Management Office. "Industry-standard e-business

solutions require static e-mail addresses, and that is the direction the Air Force is headed."

Not only is there a huge potential for Air Force cost avoidance, but mission support will be enhanced by empowering every member to reliably connect and communicate without worry about changing e-mail addresses every couple of years, the captain said.

The AF eMail plan calls for the Air Force to be fully capable under AF eMail by 2007. Currently, every senior Air Force official has been provided an account.

"We've segmented the force based on mission requirements and will slowly scale the availability to the entire force versus an all at once implementation," Captain Phillips said. "We started with the highest level leaders, and our plan is to offer it to other segments of the force this summer."

During the initial stages, members will continue to use their local or major command e-mail accounts in addition to the AF eMail account.

BRAC falls in line with future total force vision

compiled by
Master Sgt. Orville Desjarlais
Air Force Print News

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Air Force leaders kept a steady eye on the big picture, to include the future total force, when they began planning four years ago to make recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure committee.

"It is essential that we find the right mix for active duty and the reserve component," said Maj. Gen. Gary W. Heckman, the assistant deputy chief of staff for Air Force

plans and programs. "We have to retain our Guard, Reserve and civilian partners as part of one team and cannot do this mission without them."

Air National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Daniel James III agreed. "The harsh reality is that the Air Force will be buying considerably less force structure — airplanes — than we now fly. That means we may close units, combine units or share airplanes."

If President Bush and Congress accept the Pentagon's proposal, seven states would have no Guard

flying units. Closing and base realignments will consolidate aircraft and operations into larger squadrons, optimizing resources. By 2011, all F-16 and A-10 squadrons will have 18 or 24 aircraft, and C-130 and KC-135 squadrons will have 12 or 16 aircraft, according to officials.

If the BRAC recommendations are approved, the Air Force would save an estimated \$2.6 billion through 2011 and \$14.6 billion over the next 20 years.

For more information, visit www.af.mil and click on BRAC.

Air Force continues search for Junior ROTC instructors

by Master Sgt. Ralph Bitter
Air Force Junior ROTC

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. — Officials continue to search for qualified instructors to serve in rapidly expanding Air Force Junior ROTC programs. Forty-eight new Junior ROTC units will be opened in high schools in 21 states, with more to follow.

To meet the goal, 35 officers and 60 (noncommissioned officers) are needed to serve in the new units, said

Jo Alice Talley, chief of instructor management for Air Force Junior ROTC. In addition to the new positions for the fall, another 50 to 75 positions in existing locations are expected to be vacated through instructor retirement.

The program will continue to grow from its current 746 units to 945 units by the start of the 2007-2008 school year.

"With more than 160 schools on the waiting list, we expect to be able to open another 75 units in 2006 and 76 in 2007, which will bring us to

the authorized (number)," said Col. H.B. McCarraher III, Air Force Junior ROTC director. "This expansion allows Air Force Junior ROTC to open 199 new units across the world and reach an additional 20,000 to 30,000 students on top of the 104,000 already enrolled in the program."

For more information about instructor opportunities and requirements, call toll free (866) 235-7682, Ext. 35275 or 35300; DSN number 493-5275 or 5300; or visit www.afoats.af.mil.

Airman allowed to show service colors while traveling

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Airmen traveling to and from the U.S. Central Command Air Forces' area of responsibility now have the option to wear the desert combat uniform on those flights.

"This was about pride. Other services were coming home in uniform and experiencing tremendous support along the way from the American public," said Senior

Master Sgt. Dana Athnos, the Air Force's uniform board superintendent. "Our Airmen were in civilian clothes, and people didn't readily recognize them as Air Force personnel. They simply want the country to know they are proud of their service too."

The new policy allows Airmen to wear their uniforms when traveling inside the United States to their port of departure, so long as they fly aboard a U.S.-based airline. Airmen may also wear their uni-

forms when traveling to the AOR if they are flying on a military or chartered commercial aircraft. The same rules apply when Airmen come home.

Also, part of the policy is a requirement that Airmen carry a change of civilian clothes with them if they choose to wear a uniform, and a clean uniform if they choose to wear civilian clothes. That kind of preparedness allows Airmen to adjust their appearance should the situation demand it.